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ABSTRACT

In 1978-79 a study was conducted to identify the characteristics of a successful community college foundation and the conditions that foster foundation success. A review of the literature and a panel of experts were used to identify seven characteristics and 22 conditions associated with a successful foundation, and presidents and development officers from colleges with successful foundations were asked to rank order these characteristics and conditions. The top-ranked characteristics were strong public relations, involvement of community leaders and potential donors as members of the foundation, and the use of the foundation as a vehicle for community involvement in the college. The top-ranked conditions that foster success were organized and defined planning efforts, a governing board that is aware of its roles and responsibilities, and a clear statement of purpose for the foundation. Three themes summarize the conditions proposed by the panel of experts and validated by the community college administrators: planning, communication, and motivation. The study report reviews the history of foundations, shows the rank-orderings of the conditions and characteristics, and outlines conclusions and recommendations for further study. (JP)

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RESOURCE PAPER NO. 23

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONDITIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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CHARACTERISTICS AND CONDITIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

During 1978-79 academic year a study was conducted in public community colleges in the Southeastern United States to identify those characteristics and conditions of a successful community college foundation as perceived by presidents and development officers at colleges with active foundations.

Foundations have played a major role in the development of higher education. The beginning of higher education can be traced back to Plato's Academy. The continuation of this academy was fostered at the death of Plato by his gifts of books and his estate. In Rome wealthy individuals of the state set aside funds for the establishment and maintenance of hospitals, old age homes and asylums.

During the early beginnings of universities in Europe, wealthy individuals in the community supported the university. With the start of Oxford and Cambridge, the first classes were held in the homes of the people of the community.

This tradition was continued in the United States. Harvard had a humble beginning with the donation of 300 volumes and a small amount of money from John Harvard. Although the institution had many problems during its early years, today Harvard has the largest foundation in the United States, with $1.5 billion dollars. Many of the other great universities in the United States have had similar beginnings.

Philanthropy and the presence of a college foundation has been helpful not only in the establishment of major universities, but also in the development of major programs at the university as well as the development of new processes for the advancement of society. Examples can be found in the development of programs for minorities and women as well as discoveries in the field of medicine and technology.

Foundations have had a substantial influence on the development of education in American society. Although the federal government gave a major impetus to higher education through the Morrill Act of 1862, which created land-grant colleges, private philanthropy was a major resource for the development of private institutions in the United States. Yale University established the first alumni fund in 1890. The Kansas University Endowment Association, incorporated in 1893, is the oldest independent but affiliated foundation designed to aid a state institution through the use of private resources. University foundations have provided the funds and support to sustain and maintain a high level of quality at both public and private institutions.

The history of foundations at community colleges has been much shorter than that of university foundations. The first public junior college opened in 1902 at Joliet, Illinois. The first program of annual giving at a community college was established in 1906. Foundations did not fully develop at community colleges until recently. Highlands Community College Foundation, established in 1962, is believed to be the oldest college-related foundation.

Characteristics of a Community College Foundation

One of the purposes of this study was to determine the characteristics of a successful community college foundation. Success was defined as the ability of an organization to meet its stated objectives. Although no studies were found that identified the characteristics of a successful foundation, several statements have been made regarding successful foundations.

Woodbury (1973) in his article saw the community college foundation's primary purpose as an effective vehicle for raising funds. Many of the earlier studies of fundraising at community colleges included data dealing with community college foundations. These studies showed an increasing amount of funds coming to colleges through the foundation. (Bremer, 1965; MacRoy, 1970; Hargis and Blocker, 1974)

Luck and Tolle (1978)stated in their book on college fund-raising that:

> One measure of success for a foundation is the number of gifts accumulated. However, the best evaluative measure is reflected by the fiscal assistance provided to the college. (p. 49)

Strong public relations with the community was seen as another characteristic of a community college foundation. Sharron (1978) cited the foundation as..."a means of providing additional citizen input into meeting the special needs of the college." (p. 2) Woodbury (1973) saw the foundation as a vehicle for facilitating the involvement of community leaders and potential donors.

Past studies have suggested several characteristics of a successful foundation. Some came from a University model, others have been developed from the past history of foundations. This study examined the perceptions of those most involved with community college foundations, the college president and development officer, to determine the characteristics of successful foundations.

Procedures of the Study

In order to establish the characteristics and conditions of a successful foundation, the study was carried out in two phases. The first phase identified the population used in the study and established the initial criteria of a successful foundation. Through the use of a model questionnaire to the public community colleges in the Southeastern United States, the researcher was able to determine that there were thirty-eight college foundations that met the requirements of the study.

The initial criteria was established through a survey of the literature and the use of a panel of experts. A selected group of ten presidents from exemplary community college foundations was used to field-test the initial criteria. This procedures established a list of seven characteristics of a successful foundation and twenty-two conditions that foster a successful foundation.

Phase Two validated the characteristics and conditions of a successful community college foundation established in Phase One, summarized the

findings of the study and developed conclusions.

The following are the ranking of the characteristics selected by the presidents and development officers:

1. Establish strong public relations with the community.
2. Involves effective community college leaders and potential donors as members.
3. Provides a vehicle for community involvement in the institution.
4. Has a series of ongoing projects sponsored by the foundation that are oriented to the college.
5. Raises large amounts of money.
6. Provides a source of student aid.
7. Initiates new ideas and processes.

Public relations was seen as the most important characteristic of a successful foundation. The use of the foundation as a vehicle for the involvement of community leaders and the community was also rated highly. Having the projects sponsored by the foundation being oriented to the college was another characteristic rated highly. The raising of money was rated fourth by the respondents to the questionnaire with regard to characteristics of a successful foundation.

Presidents and development officers might use these characteristics to evaluate the present progress of their foundation. How is public relations oriented to the foundation? Are community leaders involved? Are the projects of the foundation oriented to the college? How do these factors relate to the money raised by the foundation?

Twenty-two conditions were listed by the panel of experts. They were:

1. Has an organized and defined planned effort at fund-raising and resource development, involving the president and the community.
2. Has a not-for-profit association.
3. Establishes programs to involve community leaders.
4. Has a diversity of activities which allows people to participate in activities which foster community development.
5. Develops programs and courses that are people oriented which lend themselves readily to resources and fund development.
6. Lends itself to activities which allow for special recognition of donors.
7. Supports activities and programs that interest the ten per cent of the community that gives ninety per cent of the money.
8. Establishes activities and programs that allow for funds in perpetuity.
9. Has annual sustained activities in several areas.
10. Has liquid and non-liquid assets.
11. Conducts foundation activities in several areas.
12. Has an annual funding activity.
13. Has developed sophisticated mass and limited distribution materials.
14. Has activities which are centered on specific ideas or courses.

15. Has specific public relations activities for small groups on the community college campus with no fund-raising agenda.
16. Has a governing board that is aware of its role and responsibility.
17. Has a professional person that works with the president to establish fund-raising plans.
18. Has an alumni association.
19. Involves the formal and informal power structure of the community on the foundation board.
20. Has a faculty that is supportive and knowledgeable of the foundation.
21. Has a program for deferred giving.
22. Has a clear statement of purpose for the foundation.

Community college administrators ranked the following ten conditions out of twenty-two conditions established by a panel of experts:

		Rank
1.	Has an organized and defined planned effort at fund-raising and resource development, involving the president and the community.	1
16.	Has a governing board that is aware of its roles and responsibility.	2
22.	Has a clear statement of purpose for the foundation.	3
3.	Establishes programs to involve community leaders	4
17.	Has a professional person that works with the president to establish fund-raising plans.	5
2.	Has a not-for-profit association.	6
19.	Involves the formal and informal power structure of the community as the foundation board.	7
5.	Develops programs and causes that are people oriented which lend themselves readily to resource and fund development.	8
8.	Establishes activities and programs that allow for funds in perpetuity.	9
20.	Has a faculty that is supportive and knowledgeable of the foundation.	10

A review of the conditions established by the panel of experts and rated by the presidents and development officers established three themes that summarize these conditions. These three themes were planning, communication and motivation.

Planning can be considered as a process to accomplish systems change in an organization. Without planning, the decisions made by an administrator tend to be made on a superficial basis, either in response to a crisis or in the footsteps of the actions of other colleges in a similar situation. Studies of development, fund-raising and foundations have consistently placed heavy emphasis on the use of planning. Planning enables an organization to operate effectively in an environment of change, therefore becoming a necessity for a college and its foundation.

Communication, according to Gross (1964), was an essential part of the internal functioning of an organization as well as the only way the group can have any effect on the people in their environment. Good communications and public relations have been shown to be a need of community colleges. Harper (1976) stated:

> ...the community college does operate in an increasingly competitive society where the recipe for support must be cut into increasingly smaller portions as various good things in the society vie for attention and assistance. (p. 9)

This same competitiveness faces the community college foundation. Elements of communication should be a part of the conditions necessary for a successful foundation.

A person or community must be motivated to be supportive of an organization. The challenge to every organization has been to identify those factors which will motivate the community to support that organization. Motivation should be one of the themes found in the conditions of a successful community college foundation. Previous writing on community college foundations, as well as the studies done on planning, communication, and motivation theory, all offer insights into the college foundation. Each offer criteria for the evaluation of community college foundations.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were derived as a result of a review of the findings of the study:

1. Selected characteristics and conditions do exist that are perceived by presidents and development officers in the Southeastern United States to be associated with a successful community college foundation.

The established characteristics and conditions developed from the review of literature and the panel of experts were accepted by more than eighty per cent of the respondents. The twenty per cent that added criteria clarified the established characteristics and conditions of a successful community college foundation.

2. The findings recognize that fund-raising is an integral part of a strong public relations program and basically cannot exist unless there is a well-conceived and strong public relations activity.

A comparison of the mean responses from community college administrators to the developed characteristics of a successful community college foundation established strong public relations with the community as the highest ranked characteristic. This conclusion is supported by the writings of Sharron (1978) but does not support Luck (1974) and Silvera (1974), studies which saw the amount of money raised as a major characteristic.

3. A major condition necessary for a successful community college foundation is having an organized and defined planned effort at fund-raising and resource development involving the president and the community.

A comparison of the mean responses to the established conditions necessary for a successful foundation supported having an organized and defined planned effort at fund-raising and resource development involving the president and the community. Much of the previous research (Sims, 1973; Luck, 1974; Silvera, 1974) would also support this conclusion. Sims, Luck,

and Silvera advocated a strong emphasis on fund-raising and acknowledged the place of planning in the development of the foundation. Sims (1973) supported the coordination of resource development and the activities of the foundation.

4. The findings confirm that planning is the major theme needed in the development and maintenance of a successful foundation.

Several of the conditions needed for a successful foundation can be summarized under the theme of planning. A majority of the ten top conditions of a successful foundation have elements of planning in them. This conclusion is supported by several past studies (Sims, 1973; Luck, 1974; Silvera, 1974). Sharron (1978) also advocated the importance of planning. Struckhoff (1977) in his work on community foundations placed heavy emphasis on planning.

5. Administrators that maintain a successful community college foundation have good communications with the people involved with the college and the foundation.

Three of the conditions that foster a successful community college foundation have elements of the theme of communications. Among these conditions, good communications with the governing board was ranked the highest. This conclusion supports the previous findings of Woodbury (1973) and Sharron (1978). The respondents also advocated good communications with the formal and informal power structure of the community. Sharron (1978) supports this finding in his writing. The condition of keeping the faculty informed of the works of the foundation was supported in the writings of Bremer (1965).

6. The presence of an alumni association was not perceived as a major condition affecting the success of a community college foundation.

Although Luck (1974) placed a heavy emphasis on alumni associations in the conclusions to his study, their presence was the lowest ranked condition of the twenty-two established by the panel of experts. This conclusion is supportive of Silvera's (1974) California study which could not establish the relationship of an effective foundation and the presence of an alumni association.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed from the conclusions drawn from the study:

1. The chief administrative officer should use the established characteristics of a successful foundation to examine the goals and objectives of the college's foundation.

2. The chief administrative officer or designate should examine their foundation in light of the conditions found for a successful foundation.

3. The review of the present characteristics and conditions of a

college foundation by the college administration or the governing board should enable the foundation to have a more clearly defined set of goals and objectives and enable the foundation to be more successful.

4. A chief administrative officer who wants to develop a successful foundation should place a priority on planning and good public relations.

5. The foundation board and the college president should evaluate the alumni association's cost benefit to the college.

Implications for Further Action

The following implications were developed from the findings and conclusions of the study and also observations made by the researcher during the study.

1. Colleges that have foundations, and because of fiscal constraints have difficulties in employing a full-time individual, should bring in a consultant to assist the college in establishing the role of the foundation in the long-range plans of the college.

2. If a college decides to start a foundation, sufficient time should be allowed for the development of appropriate plans for the college foundation.

3. On a national basis, an organization involved with resource development at community colleges should concentrate on developing programs and seminars for chief executive officers designed to improve understanding and awareness of the various uses of a college-related foundation.

4. If a college desires to maintain a successful foundation, the chief administrative officer should make efforts to insure the continuity of work of the development officer and the projects of the foundation.

5. Because of the changing needs of community colleges, experts in the area of community college foundations should be brought together to brainstorm possible ways of using the foundation to meet these needs.

6. State universities should make efforts to provide preservice training and instruction for future community college administrators in the areas of community college foundations and community relations.

Suggestions for Future Research

A review of the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study give impetus for making the following recommendations for studies related to community college foundations:

1. A survey should be made of administrators at community colleges with foundations in all ten U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare Regions in the United States to determine their per-

ceptions of a successful foundation.

2. Further research needs to be conducted to develop instruments to measure the success of community college foundations.

3. Research needs to be initiated to determine those conditions which are detrimental to community college foundations.

4. Specific research is needed to examine the role of the president and resource development officer in the development and maintenance of a successful community college foundation.

5. Research is needed to examine the structure and procedures of all forms of foundations (corporate, community, family, etc.) to determine their applicability to community college foundations.

In Summary

A successful community college foundation is characterized by a strong public relations program and a planned effort at involving community leaders in the foundation. Planning, effective communications both within the community and within the college, as well as an effort to motivate participation in the college are three themes that summarize the conditions that foster a successful foundation. With these elements the foundation should be a major asset to the college.

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